

Program Overview

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative is a matching grant program that encourages municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. The Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) and the Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) sponsor this grant. All North Carolina municipalities are eligible and are encouraged to apply. Calls for proposals open annually in the fall.

Program Background

In recent years, communities throughout North Carolina have begun to place more emphasis on providing facilities for biking and walking. A desire for better modal choices, the demand for more walkable and bikeable communities and a focus on smart growth initiatives have combined to highlight the need for better, more complete bicycle and pedestrian transportation systems. Comprehensive planning documents are an integral part of developing these systems, and can guide both local and state efforts to improve conditions for bicycling and walking.

To encourage the development of comprehensive local bicycle plans and pedestrian plans, the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) and the Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) have created a matching grant program to fund plan development. This program was initiated through a special allocation of funding approved by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2003 along with federal funds earmarked specifically for bicycle and pedestrian planning by the TPB. The planning grant program was launched in January 2004, and it is currently administered through NCDOT-DBPT. and it is currently administered through NCDOT-DBPT. Over the past six grant cycles, 92 municipal plans have been selected and funded from 249 applicants. A total of \$2,268,818 has been allocated. Funding is secured for 2010 at \$400,000. Additional annual allocations will be sought for subsequent years.

This is a cost reimbursement program.

Who Can Apply

All North Carolina municipalities are eligible and are encouraged to apply for a bicycle or pedestrian planning grant. Due to the limited amount of funding, regional and county governments are not eligible to apply, nor are colleges/universities or other non-municipal entities. Applications submitted and received for previous grant cycles do not carry over — municipalities must re-apply each year to be considered within the current process. Please note that the application form for 2010 has been changed and applications must be submitted using this new form.

Municipalities who currently have bicycle plans or pedestrian plans, either through this grant program or otherwise, may also apply to update their plan provided it is at least five years old.

Proposals for development of a combined bicycle/pedestrian plan will not be accepted, as the considerations, issues, needs, facilities and programs for each user group are different. Municipalities may choose to apply for funding to undertake either a bicycle plan or a pedestrian plan in any given fiscal year. Municipalities may apply for funding for the other type of plan in subsequent years. Funding is intended to support the development of a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation plan.

Submitting an application for bicycle or pedestrian planning funds is a competitive process. However, an effort will be made to award grants based not only on the merit of the proposal but to achieve statewide geographic distribution as well. Consideration will be given to funding a cross-section of municipality types.

The Role of MPO's and RPO's

Although regional plans are not currently funded, the relevant approval processes and procedures of MPO and RPO organizations should be followed by any municipality applying for funding. **A resolution by the local MPO, if applicable, will be required prior to awarding funds. A resolution by the RPO, if applicable, is**

strongly encouraged. It is strongly encouraged that the appropriate resolution be sent in with the grant application, which is due by 5:00 pm on December 4, 2009. It is also desirable for MPO and RPO planners to be part of the local team/task force guiding development of the plan.

Important Dates

Awarded municipalities will have twelve months to complete their plan, starting when the NCDOT issues a formal Notice to Proceed. Key dates for the 2010 NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative are shown below.

Activity	Date
Issue Call for Proposals	September 4, 2009
Application submission deadline - 5:00 pm	December 4, 2009
Awards Committee makes recommendations to NCDOT	March, 2010
Board of Transportation gives approval	May, 2010
Municipalities notified of award	June, 2010
Municipal Reimbursement Agreement executed and Notice to Proceed issued	Within 6 months from award notification
Plan completion deadline	Within 18 months from issuance of MRA

Plan Development

Plans may be developed by consultants or by a combination of both municipal staff and consultants. **A full-time permanent employee of the municipality must be assigned as project manager to oversee/coordinate the plan development.** A task force/steering committee must also be formed to oversee development of the plan. This group should include relevant local staff, regional planning staff, advocates and representatives of stakeholder groups as well as a DBPT staff member. The level of funding provided to a municipality for plan development will be determined by estimated cost, matching grant formula and NCDOT funding cap, if applicable. Any plan developed with these funds must be comprehensive in nature and be a stand-alone bicycle or pedestrian plan. While NCDOT encourages the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in local comprehensive plans, transportation plans, land use plans, recreation plans, greenway and open space plans, etc., applications for funding to develop such elements is not within the scope of this grant.

A plan outline and expanded template have been developed as guides to assure that plans are comprehensive in nature and to help the municipality identify all bicycle or pedestrian needs, priorities and opportunities for improvements. (See http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/guide.html for either of these documents.) These tools will assist communities to address not only the infrastructure needs of users but also to develop construction project priorities; review local policies and guidelines and recommend favorable changes; identify opportunities for the implementation of education, enforcement and safety programs; and to develop encouragement and awareness initiatives. In addition, the plan will identify projects that can be integrated into the state's Comprehensive Transportation Plan and potential TIP and Enhancement projects.

Other resources for plan development may be found on our Resources page, which contains links to planning and design guidelines, safety and education programs and initiatives, exemplary plans, and current research and development for bicycle and pedestrian planning.

(http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/links.html)

Matching Grant Formula

NCDOT planning grant funds will be provided on a sliding scale, based on municipal population, as shown in the table below. A funding cap (see below) will be applied, based on estimated costs of plan development. Neither in-kind services nor other state or federal funds from NCDOT can be used for local participation. As NCDOT draws the Powell Bill funds from the Highway Fund, they also may not be used as the local participation match.

Municipal Population	DOT Participation	Local Participation
Less than 10,000	80%	20%
10,000 to 50,000	70%	30%
50,000 to 100,000	60%	40%
Over 100,000	50%	50%

Estimated Costs / Funding Cap

Average costs associated with the development of comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plans vary greatly depending on whether the plan is prepared by a consultant, or by a combination of consultant and staff. A range of estimated costs for plans developed by consultants is shown below. Plans that are developed with limited assistance by consultants would cost less. For plans that cost more than the averages listed in the table below, the municipality must agree to pay the amount over the NCDOT cap, also shown below. Unlike other funding opportunities, preference or priority is not given to proposals that come in under the funding cap. You are encouraged to request the funding amount that allows you to produce a quality plan.

Population	Estimated Consultant Costs		NCDOT Funding Cap	
	<i>Bicycle Plan</i>	<i>Pedestrian Plan</i>	<i>Bicycle Plan</i>	<i>Pedestrian Plan</i>
Less than 10,000	\$25,000-35,000	\$25,000-31,000	\$28,000	\$24,800
10,000 to 50,000	\$35,000-65,000	\$30,000-45,000	\$45,500	\$31,500
50,000 to 100,000	\$65,000-95,000	\$45,000-65,000	\$57,000	\$39,000
Over 100,000	\$95,000-190,000	\$65,000-95,000	\$95,000	\$47,500

Staff costs and in-house services are not eligible for reimbursement with these grant funds. Allowable expenses include consultant costs associated with plan development and delivery; GIS/mapping services, as appropriate; preparation of technical illustrations and graphic design/layout of plan undertaken by consultant; non-staff costs associated with data collection and public involvement activities; and, printing/copying of plan and maps.

All electronic files, maps, technical illustrations, etc. produced with these funds will become the property of the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the funded municipality.

Selection Process

DBPT and ITRE staff will conduct a preliminary review of all applications for completeness and general appropriateness. Applications that pass the initial screening will then be reviewed by the Awards Committee. This group will include DBPT and individuals with professional experience in developing, administering, and/or implementing bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. These individuals will represent municipalities of varying sizes, MPO's and RPO's, COG's and other appropriate agencies and organizations. The Awards Committee will review each proposal and evaluate it based on the stated vision, goals and needs of the municipality; comprehensiveness of scope; understanding of issues and opportunities; level of local commitment; and, feasibility of successful plan completion. The Awards Committee will forward their recommendations to the NCDOT for final approval.

Selection Criteria

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The Awards Committee will consider the following elements in evaluating applications for bicycle and pedestrian planning grant funds. Successful proposals will address the following:

- Identify critical municipal needs for planning and/or implementation of bicycle or pedestrian improvements
- Demonstrate an understanding of needs of the particular modal user (bicyclist or pedestrian)
- Recognize the need to serve diverse populations
- Focus on the development of a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation system
- Assure assignment of appropriate level of staff to oversee / undertake plan development
- Consider policy issues and describe how bicycle or pedestrian transportation needs will be incorporated into municipal processes
- Recognize the value of developing education, enforcement and awareness initiatives
- Demonstrate widespread local support:
 - Include a strong local endorsement to undertake plan
 - Demonstrate commitment of elected officials and senior staff to carry out recommendations of plan
- Demonstrate an understanding of interrelationships with other plans:
 - Recognize opportunities to integrate with Comprehensive Transportation Plan
 - Identify potential projects for state funding
 - Identify opportunities to coordinate with other municipal, county, regional and state plans
- Demonstrate involvement of local, regional and state organizations:
 - Involve appropriate local and regional agencies and organizations in plan development
 - Appoint or utilize a local steering committee / task force
 - Identify valid partnerships for various plan development and implementation elements.
 - Include letters / endorsements that reflect type, variety and strength of support from partnering agencies, organizations and individuals
- Promote current transportation plans and initiatives:
 - Build on existing municipal or regional initiatives; coordinates with regional or neighboring community plans
 - Communicate potential for implementing existing goals and policies
- Develop realistic aspirations:
 - Show an awareness of / describe a realistic plan implementation strategy
 - Identify tasks and include a realistic time line for plan development
- Address development of modal interconnectivity (where applicable)

Conditions of Project Award

A funded municipality must be willing to execute a legal agreement with the NCDOT prior to receiving funding. This agreement, a Municipal Reimbursement Agreement (MRA), will outline the responsibilities of each party, the terms of reimbursement and the deliverables. This agreement must be executed within six months of being awarded the grant with a deadline to execute by December 31, 2010. In addition, the funded municipality must be willing to submit the final plan to the City Council or other approving authority for adoption. Selected municipalities will receive a formal Notice to Proceed from NCDOT once the following conditions are met:

- 1) the Municipal Reimbursement Agreement is fully executed
- 2) a list of potential steering committee members is submitted to NCDOT
- 3) an executed consultant contract with approved scope of work and cost proposal is submitted.

Costs incurred before receipt of a Notice to Proceed are not a reimbursable expense.

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis. The maximum amount of the award is based on the sliding scale, tied to population, and the NCDOT funding cap shown in the table above. Municipalities receiving awards will be reimbursed for the stated percentage of actual expenditures, not a lump sum, up to the funding cap maximum. Invoices for partial completion of the plan may be submitted after completion of the first draft and the final draft. One-third of the total NCDOT allocation will be withheld until the completed plan with all maps and related materials is submitted to NCDOT and approved by the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the Transportation Planning Branch. Awarded communities will be required to complete a survey and/or interview after the plan is completed.

Awarded municipalities will have eighteen months from the date of receipt of an NCDOT written Notice to Proceed to complete the plan. Quarterly reports describing accomplishments and expenditures will be required. Changes in project schedules must be approved by the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. Unspent funds may be withdrawn from municipalities that fail to meet timely benchmarks in the plan development process.

Municipalities must credit the North Carolina Department of Transportation for project participation in the plan document, in all press releases and other announcements and promotional materials related to the project.

All electronic files, maps, technical illustrations, etc. produced with these funds will become the property of the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the funded municipality.

Administration / Technical Assistance

Staff from the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) will be available to answer questions and provide guidance in soliciting proposals from consultants, developing plan elements, conducting public involvement meetings and providing access to technical resources. DBPT staff will assist in consultant selection and will give final approval on selection. DBPT staff will also attend meetings and public hearings, as appropriate. A plan outline and expanded template have been prepared to guide municipalities in the development of their plan. See the Planning Guides information on the web site for these documents. (http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/guide.html)

How to Apply

The application deadline is 5:00 pm, December 4, 2009

1. Two versions of the application form are available, Microsoft Word document and PDF. The application is designed so that applicants who use MS Word can download and save the application form, then complete the form electronically and print out for submittal.
 - ☐ Interested applicants without access to MS Word should download the PDF file and type in their information. Handwritten applications will be accepted, but are not preferred. In either case, please use only the space provided to answer the questions. View the Application and Instructions page to reach the application forms and to get detailed instructions to fill them out.
(http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/application.html)
2. The signature of an authorized City/Town staff member is required in the space provided on the first page of the application for the proposal to be eligible for consideration (e.g. City/Town Manager, Administrator, Mayor, etc.). Please print the name and title of this signatory in the space provided.
3. A resolution from the municipality is required. A resolution from an MPO, as appropriate, will also be required. RPO resolutions, as appropriate, are strongly encouraged. Arrangements should be made far enough in advance to allow time to acquire the appropriate resolution so that it may be sent in with the application.
4. Please submit one signed original and nine (9) copies of the completed application, including attachments.

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6. Other specific information on how each application packet should be formatted may be found on the Submittal Information page.
(http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/submittal.html)
Applications and supplemental materials may be printed double-sided.
7. Applications submitted on-line or via email will not be accepted.

Mail to: Helen Chaney
NCDOT Division of Bicycle &
Pedestrian Transportation
1552 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1552

Or hand-deliver to:
Helen Chaney
401 Oberlin Road, Suite 250
Raleigh, NC 27605